



Healthcare Marketing

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The Quote Garden provides more insightful quotes about stress.

Medical marketing plan: practice analysis

The practice analysis is a comprehensive assessment of your practice's strengths and weaknesses. Understanding what your practice does well and where it needs improvement will help you develop the kind of practice and marketing strategy that attracts your target market.

Making a thorough assessment of your practice involves evaluating all of the factors that affect it including culture, image, organizational structure, medical and office staff, financial resources, relationships with patients, treatment philosophy, physical environment, operational procedures, billing methods, and prominence in the community. It also involves creating a profile of your patient base and determining what kind of patients you would like to attract to your practice. The assessment provides the opportunity for you to determine what sets your practice apart from the competition, which is a key selling point.

The practice analysis is an essential component of the marketing plan. Knowing your practice's strong areas and weak spots makes it possible for you to build upon its strengths and correct weaknesses. This will enable you to develop a marketing mix (products/services, price, place, and promotion) that targets and captures the kind of patients you are interested in bringing into your practice. Besides, you will not be able to beat your competition if you have not determined your competitive edge.

Public relations: put your practice in the spot light



Public relations (PR) involve using the media to build a favorable public image. PR is a business' efforts to build positive relationships with its stakeholders – people who have an interest in the business. Of course, patients and potential patients are primary stakeholders for healthcare practitioners. Other stakeholders might include investors, employees, hospitals, colleagues, media, and community members.

PR is about getting free exposure that puts your practice in the presence of your target audience. Just like with advertising, the goal of public relations is to attract and obtain new patients. But unlike advertising, PR does not involve paying a fee to a particular advertising outlet to deliver a sales message about your services. PR is an indirect means of selling because the focus is on getting others, like the media, to talk or write about your practice. Developing relationships with media outlets and disseminating information on topics of interest or concern to your target audience can increase public exposure for your business.

PR can create goodwill and a positive reputation for your practice. The more your target audience – potential patients – hears or reads about your practice, the more likely they are to call your office and make an

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appointment. Sending press releases to media, speaking at events, sponsoring charitable events, participating in social media sites, conducting free health screenings, and writing articles that provide a byline are some of the ways that you can use PR to reach your target audience.

The first step in creating a public relations program is to develop a plan. Questions to ask yourself when creating a plan include the following:

1. Do I really have the time and resources to devote to public relations?
2. Can I afford to hire a public relations professional, if necessary?
3. What are my goals and objectives for the PR program?
4. Who is my target audience?
5. What PR activities will best reach my target audience?

Marketing is, of course, an ongoing process that includes several methods. PR is one of the methods that you can use to build your practice.

Stop the madness with these simple stress relievers



Most of us are feeling some kind of stress. Too many responsibilities, personal issues, and even the good things that are happening in our lives can cause stress. If we are to live healthy and long lives, then we must find a way to manage the stress that living creates. Taking time everyday – even if it is just a little bit – for ourselves to do something fun, interesting, or enlightening will help us find more peace and have more joy in our lives.

Some great stress relievers that do not necessarily cost a fortune include the following:

Engage in child's play

Do you remember all those childhood activities like coloring pictures in books, playing jacks, blowing bubbles, making model airplanes, and painting by numbers? Even has an adult, activities like these can still be fun to do. It is not silly to take a break and just do something that's easy and fun.

If childhood games are not for you, there are plenty of fun activities for grown-ups. Oil painting, baking, board games, pencil puzzles, dancing, tennis, and knitting are just a few of the activities that you might enjoy. The key is to have fun and relieve stress. So if taking a class or playing board games with friends will cause you some kind of stress, then don't do it.

Commune with nature

You may not live near an ocean, a mountain range, or a forest preserve, but you can still connect with nature. Keeping a small garden, having house plants, or taking a walk through the neighborhood to look at flowers can take you away from the frenzy to a more peaceful place.

Read that book

Is there a great novel just sitting on your shelf waiting to read? Now is the time to dust it off and read it. If you can only devote ten minutes out of your busy day to reading your book, it will be worth it. If

necessary, schedule time on your calendar everyday for reading. You can call it "a little time of peace and pleasure for me." And sipping on a nice cup of herbal tea or a refreshing cool beverage will add to the pleasure of the moment.

Breath, breath, breath

Have you ever been moving so fast, either physically or emotionally, that your heart was racing and you found yourself shaking? That's when you know it is time to slow down. Sure it is not easy to decrease your pace when work, family, school, meetings, social engagements, and other commitments are constantly competing for your time. But finding some time and a place that will allow you to take some deep breaths will help. If only for five minutes, take the time to breath in an out very slowly. Focus on your breathing and being centered within yourself. It will refresh and ground you.

Take time away from work, even if you love it

Work can be exciting, joyful, and rewarding. Some people love their work so much that they would do it day and night. No matter how much you love your job or how important it might be, taking time away from it is crucial. When we are off balance, we will feel stress. And working too much – even at a job that you love – will throw your life out of balance. Making time for friends, family, entertainment, recreation, household management, and other areas will help you create a well-rounded life.

Will we ever be free of stress in our lives? It's not likely, but we can develop ways to de-stress. After all, life is not just about work, school, and other responsibilities. When we commit to doing things just for the fun or relaxation of it, we are giving ourselves the attention we deserve. No matter what our responsibilities might be, we must take care of self first.

►► INSIGHTS ABOUT STRESS ◀◀

"The time to relax is when you don't have time for it."

Attributed to both Jim Goodwin and Sydney J. Harris

"Stress is nothing more than a socially acceptable form of mental illness."

Richard Carlson

"Men for the sake of getting a living forget to live."

Margaret Fuller

"Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop."

Ovid

"For fast-acting relief, try slowing down."

Lily Tomlin

"To sit with a dog on a hillside on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden, where doing nothing was not boring - it was peace." *Milan Kundera*

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